

Variation to the Composition of the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

Consultation document

We are the Environment Agency

We're here to protect homes and habitats – not just to safeguard what exists, but to create places of resilience and renewal, where nature returns and futures can take root.

We're regulators and reformers, engineers and ecologists, inspectors and incident responders. Some of us are in labs and offices. Others on riverbanks. Many in boots, hi-vis, or waders.

But wherever you find us, and whatever we're doing, we're one team – all guardians.

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About this Consultation

This document explains why we are consulting and what we are consulting you on. It is designed to help you understand and comment on the proposed option for the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) Composition.

Why we are consulting

We are consulting to get feedback from all those individuals, groups and organisations who are affected by, or interested in, the proposed Variation of the Composition of the Thames RFCC, in line with the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (England and Wales) Regulations 2011.

What we are consulting on

Committee Composition

We are consulting on the Variation of the Composition of the Thames RFCC due to local government reorganisation in Surrey. The variation process is set out in the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (England and Wales) Regulations 2011, Part 3 (9) and requires Ministerial approval.

The Composition Variation must be made in line with the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 and subsequently there are certain limitations when proposing a new scheme. These restrictions are outlined in Section 2.

In 2011 when the transition was made from Regional Flood Defence Committees to Regional Flood and Coastal Committees, it was confirmed that Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) representation was a matter for individual RFCCs to propose.

We want your views

Interested parties will likely include:

- the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee
- Lead Local Flood Authorities
- Local Authorities
- Flood Resilience Forums/Groups
- Water Companies
- Members of the Public

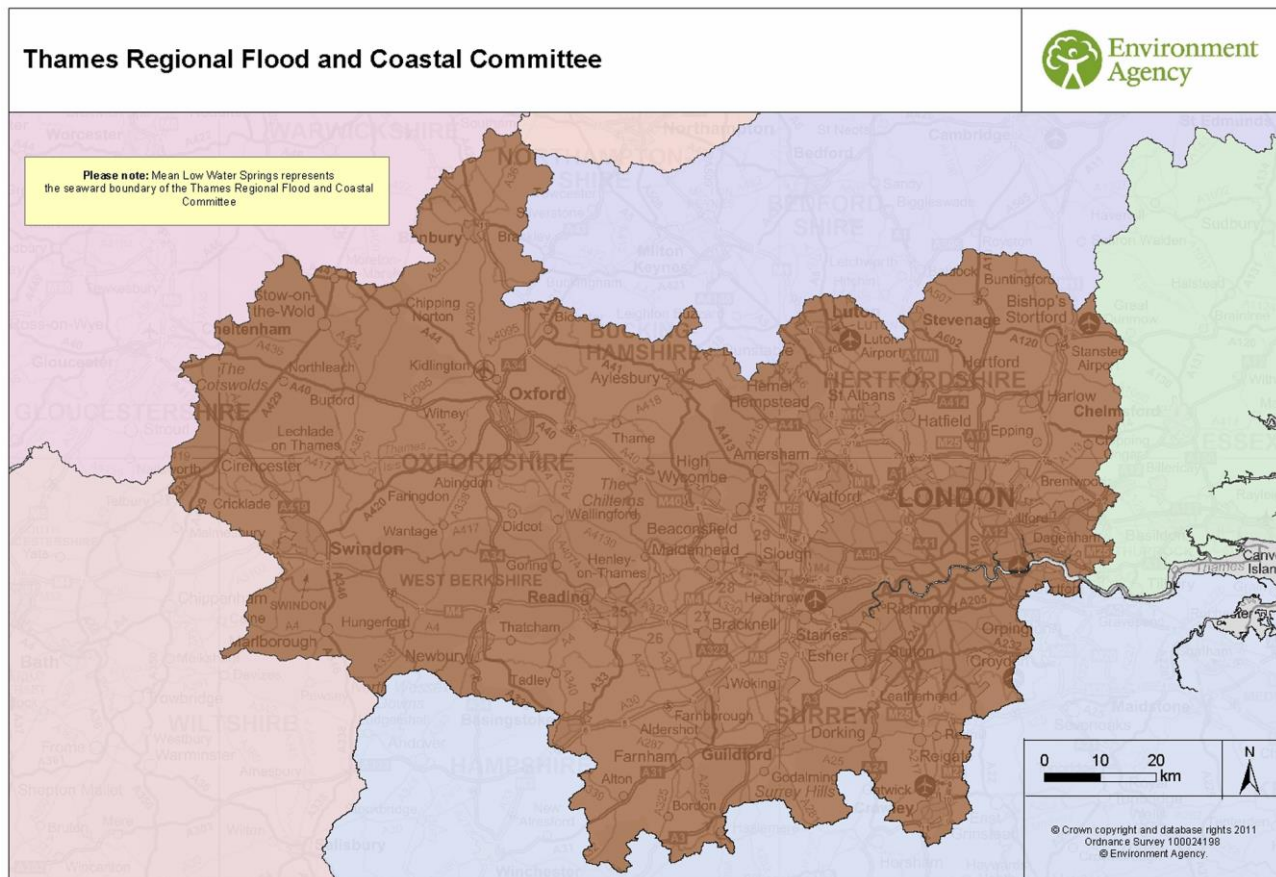
We want to hear your thoughts on our proposal as outlined above. Section 2 provides more information on the background for the proposal. You will find the consultation questions in Section 3 of this document and information on how to respond in Section 4.

Background to the proposal

The RFCCs are Committees established by the Environment Agency under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 that brings together members appointed by Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) and independent members with relevant experience for 3 purposes:

- to ensure there are coherent plans for identifying, communicating and managing flood and coastal erosion risks across catchments and shorelines
- to promote efficient, targeted and risk-based investment in flood and coastal erosion risk management that optimises value for money and benefits for local communities
- to provide a link between the Environment Agency, LLFAs, other risk management authorities, and other relevant bodies to bring about mutual understanding of flood and coastal erosion risks in its area

There are 12 Committees in England and each has a Chair appointed by Defra. Thames RFCC stretches from Oxfordshire and Swindon to London and Essex and includes Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Surrey and Hampshire. You can see this in the map below.



The local government reorganisation of Surrey County Council means a change to the Constituent Authority Membership of the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee is required.

On 28 October A written ministerial statement was made to Parliament. This set out the Secretary of State's decision to implement the proposal for 2 unitary councils in Surrey.

From April 2027, the existing county council and 11 district and borough councils will be replaced by 2 new unitary councils – East Surrey and West Surrey.

These new authorities will deliver all local government services in their respective areas including being Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs). The creation of these new authorities has implications for the composition of the Thames Regional Flood and Coast Committee.

The Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee membership currently includes representation from Surrey County Council. This membership was signed off by the Secretary of State in 2011. Due to the changes in Surrey, the Committee membership will need to be varied before 1 December 2026 to represent the new unitary councils on 1 April 2027.

Legislative Restrictions

Any Variation to the Composition of the Committee must be made in line with the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (England and Wales) Regulations 2011.

These Regulations require the total number of members to be at least 11 and no more than 25 (unless approved by the Minister). There can be no more than 11 Environment Agency appointed members (unless approved by the Minister) and the number of members appointed by constituent authorities must be at least one more than the sum of Environment Agency appointed members and the Chair.

Thames RFCC currently has:

- 13 elected members
- 11 Independent members appointed by the Environment Agency
- 1 Chair appointed by the Minister

A Variation takes effect when the Environment Agency publishes a document specifying the Region for which the Committee is established and the Composition of the Committee.

The variation does not take effect unless the Environment Agency has consulted with interested persons for a period of not less than 6 weeks in relation to the Variation to the Composition of the Committee; taken account of any representations; and the varied composition has been approved by the Minister. The Minister may require a change to the proposed varied composition of a Committee before approving the varied composition.

The new Composition must be published before 1 December 2026 to come into force on 1 April 2027.

Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Composition on formation in 2011

In 2011 the following composition was signed off by the Secretary of State:

- a Chair appointed by the Minister
- eleven independent members appointed by the Environment Agency (EA)
- thirteen members appointed by, or on behalf of, each Constituent Authority or Groups of Constituent Authorities as set out below

Constituent Authority	Number of members of the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to be appointed by, or on

	behalf of, each Constituent Authority or Group of Constituent Authorities
Buckinghamshire Council; Luton Borough Council; Slough Borough Council; Central Bedfordshire Council	One member appointed by, or on behalf of, this group of Constituent Authorities
Essex County Council; Thurrock Council	One member appointed by or on behalf of Essex County Council representing this group of Constituent Authorities
Bracknell Forest Borough Council; Hampshire County Council; Reading Borough Council; West Berkshire Council; Windsor and Maidenhead Royal Borough Council; Wokingham Borough Council; West Sussex County Council	One member appointed by, or on behalf of, this group of Constituent Authorities
Oxfordshire County Council; Swindon Council; Gloucestershire County Council; Northamptonshire County Council; Warwickshire County Council; Wiltshire Council	One member appointed by or on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council representing this group of Constituent Authorities
Hertfordshire County Council	One
Surrey County Council	One
Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council; Havering Council; Redbridge Council	One member appointed by, or on behalf of, this group of Constituent Authorities
Barnet London Borough Council; Brent London Borough Council; Ealing London Borough Council; Harrow London Borough Council; Hillingdon London Borough Council; Hounslow London Borough Council	One member appointed by, or on behalf of, this group of Constituent Authorities
Bromley London Borough Council; Bexley London Borough Council; Greenwich London Borough Council; Lewisham London Borough Council	One member appointed by, or on behalf of, this group of Constituent Authorities
Lambeth London Borough Council; Southwark London Borough Council	One member appointed by, or on behalf of, this group of Constituent Authorities

Enfield London Borough Council; Hackney London Borough Council; Haringey London Borough Council; Newham London Borough Council; Tower Hamlets London Borough Council; Waltham Forest London Borough Council	
Camden London Borough Council; Westminster City Council; City of London; Hammersmith and Fulham London Borough Council; Islington London Borough Council; Kensington and Chelsea Royal Borough Council	One member appointed by, or on behalf of, this group of Constituent Authorities
Croydon London Borough Council; Kingston-upon-Thames Royal Borough Council; Merton London Borough Council; Richmond-upon-Thames London Borough Council; Sutton London Borough Council; Wandsworth Borough Council	One member appointed by, or on behalf of, this group of Constituent Authorities

The proposal is for the public consultation to consider the following option for the Variation to the Composition of the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.

Consultation feedback will then be presented to the Committee to decide the final Variation to submit to the Environment Agency Board and to the Minister for their approval.

Proposal

No changes to the number of independent (EA appointed) or LLFA Members or to the LLFAs sharing seats.

The existing LLFA seat position for Surrey County Council would be shared between the new unitary authorities; West Surrey and East Surrey. The proposal is that these 2 unitary authorities appoint 1 LLFA member to represent them as a group.

Proposal - composition of the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee:

- a Chair appointed by the Minister
- eleven independent members appointed by the Environment Agency (EA)
- thirteen members appointed by, or on behalf of, each Constituent Authority or Groups of Constituent Authorities as set out below

Constituent Authority	Number of members of the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to be appointed by, or on behalf of, each
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	Constituent Authority or Group of Constituent Authorities
Buckinghamshire Council; Luton Borough Council; Slough Borough Council; Central Bedfordshire Council	One member appointed by, or on behalf of, this group of Constituent Authorities
Essex County Council; Thurrock Council	One member appointed by or on behalf of Essex County Council representing this group of Constituent Authorities
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Oxfordshire County Council; Swindon Council; Gloucestershire County Council; Northamptonshire County Council; Warwickshire County Council; Wiltshire Council	One member appointed by or on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council representing this group of Constituent Authorities
Hertfordshire County Council	One
West Surrey Council; East Surrey Council	One member appointed by, or on behalf of, this group of Constituent Authorities
Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council; Havering Council; Redbridge Council	One member appointed by, or on behalf of, this group of Constituent Authorities
Barnet London Borough Council; Brent London Borough Council; Ealing London Borough Council; Harrow London Borough Council; Hillingdon London Borough Council; Hounslow London Borough Council	One member appointed by, or on behalf of, this group of Constituent Authorities
Bromley London Borough Council; Bexley London Borough Council; Greenwich London Borough Council; Lewisham London Borough Council	One member appointed by, or on behalf of, this group of Constituent Authorities
Lambeth London Borough Council; Southwark London Borough Council	One member appointed by, or on behalf of, this group of Constituent Authorities

Enfield London Borough Council; Hackney London Borough Council; Haringey London Borough Council; Newham London Borough Council; Tower Hamlets London Borough Council; Waltham Forest London Borough Council	
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Croydon London Borough Council; Kingston-upon-Thames Royal Borough Council; Merton London Borough Council; Richmond-upon-Thames London Borough Council; Sutton London Borough Council; Wandsworth Borough Council	One member appointed by, or on behalf of, this group of Constituent Authorities

Consultation questions

We welcome your comments on our proposals and would particularly value your views on the question listed below:

Q1. Do you agree with the proposed changes to the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee composition?

Responding to this consultation

Important dates

Opening date: 3 August 2026

Closing date: 13 September 2026

How to respond

You can view the consultation documents and questions online at [INSERT LINK]. Here you can submit your response using our online tool which will enable you to manage your comments more effectively. It will also help us to gather and summarise responses quickly and accurately as well as reduce the costs of the consultation.

If you would prefer to submit your response by email or letter, or if you would like to ask for a printed version of the document to be posted to you, please contact 03708 506 506 and ask for Stuart Elks, or email RFCC_Correspondence@environment-agency.gov.uk.

However, if you would like to send your response by post, please send your completed response form by 13 September 2026 to:

Stuart Elks
Environment Agency,
Horizon House,
Deanery Road,
Bristol,
BS1 5TL

What will responses be used for

Responses to this Consultation will be reviewed and considered by the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. They will recommend a revised Composition to go to the Environment Agency Board and Minister. Environment Agency staff dealing with this consultation will see all responses in full.

How we will use your information

We will not respond individually to responses. After the consultation has closed the Thames RFCC will produce a consultation response document and this will be published on this consultation's web page by the end of November 2026.

We will not publish names of individuals who respond. We will publish the name of the organisation for those responses made on behalf of an organisation.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, we may be required to publish your response to this consultation, but will not include any personal information. If you have requested your response to be kept confidential, we may still be required to provide a summary of it. For more information see our Personal Information Charter.

Privacy Notice

The Environment Agency would like to keep you informed about the outcomes of the consultation. If you would like to receive an email acknowledging your response and be notified that the summary of responses has been published please give us your email address in your response to this consultation.

By providing us with your email address you consent for us to email you about the consultation. We will keep your details until we have notified you of the response document publication.

We will not share your details with any other third party without your explicit consent unless required to by law.

You can withdraw your consent to receive these emails at any time by contacting us at: standard-rules@environment-agency.gov.uk

Consultation Principles

We are running this consultation in accordance with the guidance set out in the government's Consultation Principles.

If you have any queries or complaints about the way this consultation has been carried out, please contact:

Consultation Enquiries
Environment Agency
Horizon House
Deanery Road
Bristol
BS1 5AH
Email: consultation.enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk